

**ORIGINAL**



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WS-03478A-12-0307

Kelly Aceto

Subject: FW: Water outage at Far West Water & Sewer Co., Yuma foothills Arizona Corporation Commission

**From:** Ken Booth <[kenfletcherbooth@hotmail.com](mailto:kenfletcherbooth@hotmail.com)>  
**Date:** September 21, 2012 6:45:05 PM PDT  
**To:** Thomas Galvin <[THGalvin@azcc.gov](mailto:THGalvin@azcc.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: Water outage at Far West Water & Sewer Co., Yuma foothills

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DOCKET CONTROL

**September 21, 2012**

**Mr. Galvin,**

**Thank you for your response to my correspondence in the matter of the Far West Water and Sewer outage earlier this month.**

**I understand that Far West has pending before the Commission a request for an increase in our sewer rate (docket number WS-03478A-12-0307) which would hike the current charge of \$21.75 per month to \$62.65 per month representing an annual cost of \$490.80 per lot.**

**In view of Far West's obvious negligence in providing and maintaining adequate generator back-up to insure non-interrupted water and sewer system to its thousands of customers, it strikes me that the company's asking for a new sewer rate three (3) times the current one is a gross overreach and should be summarily denied.**

**Perhaps, Far West should have long ago invested some of its substantial system revenues in the purchase of enough generators so that it would have enough and not have to scrounge when the bottom falls out and push comes to shove leaving customers literally high and dry for up to 40 hours. Again, at what point does this alleged negligence become an issue of public safety and sanitation?**

**With this being said, I am requesting that you make this letter along with the following e-mails part of the public record as evidence of my strongest opposition to the above-captioned docket case regarding Far West Water and Sewer Co, Inc.**

**Ken Booth ~ 14860 E. 51st Drive ~ Yuma, AZ 85367  
[kenfletcherbooth@hotmail.com](mailto:kenfletcherbooth@hotmail.com)**

From: TGalvin@azcc.gov  
To: kenfletcherbooth@hotmail.com  
Date: Fri, 21 Sep 2012 17:36:37 -0700  
Subject: RE: Water outage at Far West Water & Sewer Co., Yuma foothills (SECOND LETTER)

Mr. Booth,

I am the policy advisor to Brenda Burns at the Corporation Commission. Commissioner Burns has received several complaints and is working to find out the facts of what happened. Thank you for informing us what you experienced and where you felt the company fell short of its service obligations.

First of all, we are very sorry to hear that you went without water for that length of time. The company informed the Commission that it did deploy 3 emergency generators, 3 rented generators and one emergency generator borrowed from the City of Yuma.

We were advised that that about 10% to 20% of customers were without water service for the duration of the power outage.

If you have any more concerns you would like to share, please do so. The office telephone number is 602.542.0745

Thank you,

Thomas Galvin

The Policy Advisor to Commissioner Brenda Burns

Arizona Corporation Commission

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**From:** Ken Booth [<mailto:kenfletcherbooth@hotmail.com>]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 19, 2012 4:20 PM  
**To:** Carmen Madrid  
**Cc:** Newman-Web; Burns-Web; Pierce-Web; Stump-Web; Kennedy-Web  
**Subject:** RE: Water outage at Far West Water & Sewer Co., Yuma foothills (SECOND LETTER)

**September 19, 2012**

**Carmen Madrid, Utilities Consumer Analyst**

**Arizona Corporation Commission**

**RE: Far West Water & Sewer Co. outage**

**I have today received your response to my letter concerning the above-captioned matter e-mailed to the several Commissioners and to the general e-mail box for the Utilities Division on September 17, 2012. Thank you for at least acknowledging my letter.**

**However, you have ignored the major concerns over public safety and sanitation I had expressed owing to the inexplicable unpreparedness of the company to deal with a major power outage which this clearly was. While no one can affix blame on a utility for an act of God such as the storm which shut us down, Far West surely can be targeted for not having enough emergency resources on hand to keep water and sewer operations functioning until electrical power was restored.**

**Some believe this short-sightedness –if not outright neglect—by a public utility charged with public safety and sanitation as pivotal components of its government-awarded franchise might be properly considered a violation of that public trust and—if applicable—subject to a Fine. Certainly, there should be some kind of official inquiry beyond quick acceptance of unsubstantiated statements by the company, itself, without independent verification.**

**Instead, you have sent to me what appears to be a form letter, identical to others received by other affected Far West customers who have contacted the ACC regarding this incident. Your letter as do the others presents nothing more than the Company's assertion that it did all that it could and that all –repeat—ALL service had been restored to all its customers by 8:35 PM, Monday, Sept. 10, 2012 some 29 hours after services had been lost. As I stated in my earlier correspondence, this is patently untrue. I had no service whatsoever at my residence until approximately 8:00AM, Tuesday, September 11, 2012. I most assuredly am prepared to offer a sworn statement to this under penalty of perjury.**

**I take great offense in having a state government agency in charge of regulating utilities such as Far West appear to just dismiss as something unfortunate this unacceptable prolonged outage which with proper stand-by equipment could have so easily abbreviated and then offer no clue that follow-up to these complaints will even be undertaken. Shame on the Commission.**

**I'm sorry but the Commission's posture reminds me of the cleansing undertaken by that fellow mentioned in Matthew 27:24 (New International Version).**

**Ken Booth ~ 14860 E. 51<sup>st</sup> Dr. ~ Yuma, AZ 85367 ~ [kenfletcherbooth@hotmail.com](mailto:kenfletcherbooth@hotmail.com)**

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From: [CMadrid@azcc.gov](mailto:CMadrid@azcc.gov)  
To: [kenfletcherbooth@hotmail.com](mailto:kenfletcherbooth@hotmail.com)  
Date: Wed, 19 Sep 2012 14:48:26 -0700  
Subject: RE: Water outage at Far West Water & Sewer Co., Yuma foothills

Ken Booth  
14860 E. 51st Drive  
Yuma, AZ 85367  
[kenfletcherbooth@hotmail.com](mailto:kenfletcherbooth@hotmail.com)

Good Afternoon, my name is Carmen Madrid and I am a Public Utilities Consumer Analyst with the Arizona Corporation Commission ("Commission"). I have been asked to provide a response to the concern raised in your e-mail to the Commission with regards to the Far West Water and Sewer ("Far West") outage.

This power outage was more widespread than normal for Far West, affecting ALL of its facilities and its entire customer base in Yuma. APS was able to restore power to all Far West facilities by approximately 8:35pm 9/10/12.

As per the Company, Far West had deployed 3 permanent emergency generators, 3 rented emergency generators and one emergency generator borrowed from the City of Yuma throughout its service territory.

Far West reports that generators were able to power the sewer system during the entire outage. The sewer system operated throughout the outage and there were no sewage backups or overflows. As reported, approximately 10% to 20% of the Far West customers were without water sometime during outage so sewer operations were still needed to keep up with water flow. On the water side, one generator powered the Far West Water Treatment Facility. Far West was able to keep tanks relatively full throughout the remainder of the power outage, maximizing gravity provided pressure in the water system. Water pressure was low during this period but available to the majority of Far West customers. Additional repairs were needed to get the system operating. At 4:30 am on 9/14/12, customers were notified that service had been restored throughout the service area and that the water system was operating normally. As an alternate form of communication Far West opened a Facebook Page to communicate outage information to customers that were able to access the Internet.

In conclusion Far West Water and Sewer followed all emergency outage procedures and because the outage was so wide spread it was difficult to have enough emergency equipment to resolve all outage issues simultaneously. Far West made decisions as to what action would positively impact the most customers.

If you have any further questions or comments feel free to contact me,

Sincerely,

Carmen Madrid

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**From:** Ken Booth [<mailto:kenfletcherbooth@hotmail.com>]  
**Sent:** Monday, September 17, 2012 3:41 PM  
**To:** Newman-Web; Burns-Web; Pierce-Web; Stump-Web; Kennedy-Web  
**Cc:** Utilities Div - Mailbox  
**Subject:** Water outage at Far West Water & Sewer Co., Yuma foothills  
**Importance:** High

September 17, 2012

Dear Members of the Commission:

**RE: The Recent Far West Water & Sewer outage, Yuma Co.**

I, like thousands of other customers of the above-captioned water company suffered a sudden water outage earlier this month as a result of an interruption in power service to about 19,000 APS customers.

But my focus here is on Far West whose every facility, all of its wells, booster stations, the treatment plant, all of the sewage treatment plants and lift stations were abruptly rendered without power. Even the Far West customer service and administrative offices were affected.

I lost all water service at my residence at approximately 4:30 P.M. on Sunday, September 9, 2012. A statement was finally issued by the company indicating that all its services had been restored between 9:00 and 9:30 P.M. Monday, September 10<sup>th</sup>. By my count, that's just short of 29 hours.

In reality, water service at my residence was not restored until approximately 7:30 A.M. on Tuesday, September 11<sup>th</sup>, the company's statement notwithstanding. An examination of the company's Facebook page will reveal through my two posts to the company that I was still without water on Tuesday morning.

When I personally visited the Far West office on Tuesday morning, the supervisor explained to me that while the company did have generators at some of its facilities, not all had such back up (apparently including any facility or facilities designed to distribute water from the treatment center(s) to our homes.

I am amazed that in this state such gross unpreparedness is apparently not a major violation worthy of fines. At what point does no water service for in excess of 30 hours become a public safety if not a sanitation issue?

And, frankly, I am amazed at the initial reaction from the Commission's own Public Utilities Consumer Analyst who has corresponded that "...because the outage was so wide spread it was difficult to *have enough emergency equipment to resolve all outage issues simultaneously.*"

"Far West made decisions as to what action would positively impact the most customers," he said. Forgive me, Commissioners, but that sounds a lot like they did the best they could. I submit not being fully prepared for an APS power outage is not doing all they could do. I see it as yet another example of this company's inexplicable history of neglect in putting some of its generous revenues into a sensible program of maintenance and replacement instead.

On Guam where I lived for four years, there were "acceptable excuses" for not having 24 hours of uninterrupted power and water. The excuses I have heard here in this case I do not mark as "acceptable." Nor should the Commission.

**Further, with so much at stake as we approach a November election, I am surprised that any statements coming from the Commission which tend to just echo the Far West line in connection with this Yuma foothills incident would be made prior to any formal inquiry by the panel.**

**Sincerely,**

**Ken Booth**

**14860 E. 51<sup>st</sup> Drive**

**Yuma, AZ 85367**

**[kenfletcherbooth@hotmail.com](mailto:kenfletcherbooth@hotmail.com)**